

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner's supervisor for the interview conducted on September 13, 2004.

Support for the amendments

Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 16 can be found on page 10, line 10 of the specification as filed.

The 102 Rejections

The Examiner rejected Claims 19-25 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Samejima. Claims 19-25 have been canceled, thereby rendering this rejection moot.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 7, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Thompson et al and by Berger et al. Claims 1, 7, 8 and 9 are directed to methods for removing fluid from a host by direct delivery of an enterically-coated superabsorbent polymer to the intestinal tract, wherein the polymer absorbs at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline. Thompson describes feeding polymers to the stomach of an animal, not directly to the intestinal tract. Thompson does not teach or suggest directly delivering a coated superabsorbent polymer to the intestinal tract, wherein the polymer absorbs at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline. Berger teaches administering polysaccharides to the stomach, not to the intestinal tract. Berger does not teach or suggest directly delivering a coated superabsorbent polymer to the intestinal tract, wherein the polymer absorbs at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline. Therefore, as amended, Claims 1, 7, 8 and 9 are not anticipated by Thompson or Berger.

The 103 Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Samejima in view of Hider and further in view of Berger. As amended, claims 1, 2 and 5-18 are pending in the present application.

As described above, the pending claims are directed to methods of removing fluid from the intestinal tract of a host, comprising the steps of administering an enterically-coated superabsorbent polymer directly to the intestinal tract, wherein the polymer absorbs at least

20 times its weight in physiological saline. Samejima teaches administering an enterically coated core material to a host, and, optionally, a water swellable polymer can be added to the core material. However, Samejima does not teach or suggest a method for removing fluid from the intestinal tract of a host by administering an enterically coated water absorbent polymer that absorbs at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline. Likewise, neither Hider nor Berger teach or suggest a method for removing fluid from the intestinal tract of a host by administering an enterically coated water absorbent polymer that absorbs at least 20 times its weight in physiological saline. Furthermore, there is no motivation to combine any of these references. For these reasons, amended Claims 1, 2, and 5-18 are not obvious in view of Samejima, Hider or Berger, either alone or in combination.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants believe the present application now stands in condition for allowance. Early notification thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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